

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00555 01 OF 03 261803Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SIG-01 MMO-01 ACDA-12 SSM-03 NEAE-00
HA-05 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CU-04
OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 CA-01 SCS-06 CPR-01 SNM-05
/132 W

-----032678 261853Z /50

P 261540Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6631
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 DAMASCUS 0555

JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AMGT, EAID, US, SY
SUBJ: THE POSITIVE COURSE OF US-SYRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: THE FOUR YEARS SINCE THE U.S. INTERESTS SECTION
REOPENED IN DAMASCUS IN JANUARY 1974 HAVE BEEN MARKED BY
GRADUAL LESSENING OF SYRIAN SUSPICIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A
BROADENING BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC,
CULTURAL AND OTHER NON-MILITARY FIELDS. IN THE MEASURE THAT
WE CONTINUE WILLING TO TREAT ASSAD AS A VALUED PARTNER IN OUR
PEACE EFFORTS AND TO DESIGN OUR BILATERAL PROGRAMS TO MEET
SYRIA'S PERCEIVED REQUIREMENTS, OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 00555 01 OF 03 261803Z

CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND CONTRIBUTE OVER TIME TO MODERATING
SYRIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEACE WITH ISRAEL AS WELL. END SUMMARY.

2. JANUARY 1978 MARKS THE COMPLETION OF FOUR YEARS
SINCE AMERICANS RETURNED TO SYRIA TO REOPEN THE US
INTERESTS SECTION. MORE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE VISITED
DAMASCUS THIS MONTH THAN IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS PUT TO-

GETHER. A REEXAMINATION OF US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN SYRIA IS IN PROCESS AND CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON THE FY 1979 AID PROGRAM ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN. SADAT'S INITIATIVE AND AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR IT HAVE PLACED NEW STRAINS ON THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH THE PAST FOUR YEARS HAVE SEEN DEVELOP. IT IS A GOOD TIME TO TAKE STOCK AND REVIEW WHAT HAS AND WHAT HAS NOT BEEN ACCOMPLISHED INsofar AS US-SYRIA BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED. IN DOING SO WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT ASSAD DRAWS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US AND SYRIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PEACE PROCESS. THE EFFECT OF THE FORMER ON THE LATTER IS AT BEST PARTIAL AND INDIRECT.

3. POLITICAL RELATIONS: DESPITE SYRIAN OPPOSITION TO THE CURRENT COURSE OF THE PEACE PROCESS AND SYRIAN SUSPICIONS THAT A HIDDEN US HAND IS GUIDING IT, BOTH PRESIDENT ASSAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM STONGLY REAFFIRMED TO VISITING CODELS THEIR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS. THEY ALSO SPOKE OF SYRIA'S CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO UNSC RES 338 AND ITS DESIRE TO WORK WITH THE UNITED STATES TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. SYRIA ALSO WANTS TO KEEP OPEN ITS DIALOGUE WITH THE US AS A HEDGE AGAINST ISRAELI ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON. THERE IS NO OTHER POWER WHICH CAN PREVENT POTENTIAL ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION BELOW THE LITANI, ACTION WHICH COULD SEVERELY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 00555 01 OF 03 261803Z

EMBARRASS ASSAD AT THE VERY LEAST AND EVEN BRING PRESSURES ON HIM TO ATTEMPT A FUTILE MILITARY COUNTER-ACTION. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES TO SYRIA THEREFORE IS TWO-FOLD: AS A PROPONENT AND KEY ACTOR IN EFFORTS TO ADVANCE A COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL AND AS A SUPPORTER AND PROTECTOR OF SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON. BILATERAL COORDINATION UNDER THE GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT OF 1974 HAS BEEN SATISFACTORY AS HAS SYRIA'S ADHERENCE TO THE AGREEMENT'S TERMS. SYRIA IS TODAY MORE CONCERNED THAN EVER TO PROVIDE NO PRETEXT FOR MILITARY ACTION ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

4. MULTILATERAL POLITICAL ISSUES: A CHANNEL OF DIALOGUE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND VIEWS EXCHANGED WITH INCREASING REGULARITY. ONE MODEST SUCCESS STORY IS THAT SYRIA'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE US POSITION REGARDING PUERTO RICAN SELF DETERMINATION HAS MODERATED SYRIA'S UN POSITION ON THAT ISSUE. OTHERWISE, SYRIA CONTINUES TO REGARD ITSELF AS A REVOLUTIONARY STATE, IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE THIRD WORLD AND BASICALLY OPPOSED TO WESTERN INDUSTRIAL NATIONS. WHILE US ACCESS TO SYRIA'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP REMAINS LIMITED, IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS THE BAATH PARTY AND THE

PEOPLE'S COUNCIL HAVE INDICATED INTEREST IN EXPANDING THEIR CONTACTS WITH US. MOREOVER, IN THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL AREAS, READY AND GROWING ACCESS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CURRENT SITUATION.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS: US PRESENCE IN SYRIA HAS CONTRIBUTED TO RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON THE COUNTRY'S SMALL (5500 PERSONS) JEWISH COMMUNITY. WHILE THE WORD "MUSAWI" CONTINUES TO APPEAR ON THE IDENTITY CARDS OF SYRIAN JEWS, INTERNAL RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED. FOREIGN TRAVEL FOR SYRIAN JEWS, EXPANDED STEADILY UP UNTIL SUMMER 1977 WHEN THE DISCOVERY THAT A NUMBER OF THOSE TRAVELLING HAD MADE SECRET VISITS TO ISRAEL WHILE ABROAD CAUSE A VIRTUAL SUSPENSION OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 DAMASC 00555 01 OF 03 261803Z

APPROVAL FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE SYRIA. JUST PRIOR TO THIS SUSPENSION PRESIDENT ASSAD RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE REQUEST OF 13 SYRIAN JEWISH WOMEN TO EMIGRATE TO THE US UNDER A PROXY MARRIAGE PROGRAM TO PROSPECTIVE AMERICAN HUSBANDS. ASSAD HAS INDICATED HE WILL CONTINUE TO EXAMINE SUCH PROPOSALS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. IN A MORE GENERAL WAY THE CLOSE AND CONTINUOUS CONTACT WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS HAS REASSURED THEM OF OUTSIDE INTEREST IN THEIR CONDITION AND IMPROVED THE MORALE OF THIS SMALLEST OF SYRIAN MINORITIES.

6. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: FROM ITS BEGINNING IN 1975, THE A.I.D. PROGRAM HAS ADVANCED SLOWLY BUT POSITIVELY. ALTHOUGH ONLY SOME \$30 MILLION OF THE \$258 MILLION PROGRAMMED THROUGH 1978 HAVE BEEN DISBURSED, WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF MUCH MORE RAPID SPENDING RATE AS CONTRACTS ARE CONCLUDED FOR MAJOR PROJECTS. THE SYRIAN VIEW OF US ASSISTANCE HAS ALSO EVOLVED FROM AN INITIAL DESIRE TO RESTRICT US INVOLVEMENT IN ITS ECONOMY TO SPECIFIC SELF-CONTAINED PROJECTS (DAMASCUS WASTE SYSTEM, DAMASCUS-DEERA ROAD) TO THE CURRENT MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF INVITING US PARTICIPATION IN ELEMENTS OF NATION-WIDE

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00555 02 OF 03 261813Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SIG-01 MMO-01 ACDA-12 SSM-03 NEAE-00

HA-05 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CU-04

OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 CA-01 SCS-06 CPR-01 SNM-05

/132 W

-----032868 261853Z /50

P R 261540Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6632

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

UEHCR/USINT BAGHDAD 711

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 DAMASCUS 0555

JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

ECONOMIC PLANNING (TRANSPORATION AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR STUDIES, NATION-WIDE SOIL SURVEY). HEALTHY PROJECT RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED WITH EIGHT DIFFERENT MINISTRIES AND AS OF THE END OF THE YEAR, 203 SYRIAN PARTICIPANTS FROM 18 DIFFERENT MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES HAD TRAVELLED TO THE US FOR TRAINING? CONGRESSIONALLY APPROVED ASSISTANCE OF \$90 MILLION IN FY 1978 REPRESENTS ROUGHLY 10 PERCENT OF TOTAL ANTICIPATED FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA. OUR CONCLUSION IS THAT, BUILDING GRADUALLY FROM THE GROUND UP, US ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTING TO SYRIA'S DESIRE FOR PEACE IN THE REGION AND ACCOMPLISHING OUR GOALS OF BROADENING AND STRENGTHENING THE BILATERAL SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 00555 02 OF 03 261813Z

RELATIONSHIP, INCREASING SYRIANS' INTEREST IN THEIR OWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REACHING THE POORER SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION. THE SADAT INITIATIVE AND RELATED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE HAD NO DISCERNIBLE EFFECT ON OUR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES.

7. PL 480 ASSISTANCE: BEGINNING WITH THE EARLIEST AGREE-MENTS SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1974, PL 480 ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN HAS COMPLEMENTED BOTH OUR POLITICAL EFFORTS AND OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. IT HAS PROVIDED BADLY NEEDED

WHEAT AND RICE TO MEET GROWING DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS AND HAS OPENED POTENTIAL MARKETS IN SYRIA FOR US TOBACCO AND VEGETABLE OIL. UNDER THE PL 480 TITLE I SALES PROGRAM SYRIA HAS PURCHASED ON CONCESSIONAL LOAN TERMS \$56.2 MILLION IN AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES. US CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM FOR SYRIA OVER THE SAME PERIOD HAS AMOUNTED TO \$3.34 MILLION. SYRIA HAS REQUESTED 50,000 MT OF RICE AND 7,500 MT OF VEGETABLE OIL IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR. A NUMBER OF VISITS AND SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY USDA HAVE ENHANCED SYRIAN AWARENESS OF AND INTEREST IN US EXPORT COMMODITIES.

8. A CCC LINE OF CREDIT OF \$22.5 MILLION ESTABLISHED IN 1977 AS A GESTURE TO HELP SYRIA MEET SHORT TERM FOREIGN EXCHANGE DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS ASSIST US COMMODITY EXPORTS IS STILL OPEN. IT HAS NOT BEEN USED.

9. CULTURAL-INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES: BEGINNING SLOWLY WITH SYRIAN REJECTION OF OUR INITIAL OFFER OF GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND RELUCTANCE TO PERMIT OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO VISIT THE US, THE CULTURAL PROGRAM REACHED TAKE OFF POINT IN MID-1977 WITH
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 00555 02 OF 03 261813Z

SIGNING OF A BILATERAL CULTURAL AGREEMENT AND OPENING OF AN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN DAMASCUS. NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROCESS TO ESTABLISH A LARGE AND WIDE-RANGING SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT AND THE CULTURAL CENTER'S OUTREACH PROGRAM IS BEGINNING TO BRING US IN CLOSER CONTACT WITH SYRIAN UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS. THREE SYRIAN EDUCATIONAL OFFICIALS ARE NOW IN THE US ON A CU STUDY MISSION. RECENT SYRIAN DENIAL OF PERMISSION FOR TWO POLITICAL SCIENCE LECTURES TO BE GIVEN IN CULTURAL CENTER SHOULD NOT BLIND US TO FACT THAT THE CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP AS A WHOLE IS ON A STEEP UPWARD CURVE WHICH HAS NOT UP TO THIS POINT BEEN AFFECTED BY MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

10. INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM, WHILE NOT EXTENSIVE, HAS BEEN POSITIVELY LAUNCHED. ARABIC WIRELESS FILE IS DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN 50 SYRIAN USERS. RADIO AND TV, WHILE ESCHEWING POLITICAL MATERIAL, ARE WILLING TO PROGRAM SOME USIS-PROVIDED FILMS, TAPES AND DIRECT FEEDS. A MINISTRY OF INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HEAD IS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN A CU PROGRAM IN THE US AND JOURNALISTS FROM TWO SYRIAN DAILIES TRAVELLED THIS WEEK ON ANOTHER. WHILE IN GENERAL MEDIA SUSPICION AND CRITICISM OF US POLICIES REMAINS HIGHER THAN WE WOULD LIKE, OUR OFFICIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA

REPRESENTATIVES CONTINUE GRADUALLY TO INCREASE. AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ARE MORE WELCOME AND ENCOUNTER FEWER PROBLEMS THAN FOUR YEARS AGO BUT SARG STILL SUFFERS FROM LACK OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSCIOUSNESS. AMERICAN COMMERCIAL FILMS ARE NOT YET SHOWN IN SYRIAN MOVIE HOUSES BUT WE HAVE BROUGHT SARG AND MOTION PICTURES EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION TOGETHER AND THEY ARE GRADUALLY NARROWING THEIR DIFFERENCES. ALTHOUGH SYRIAN CENSORSHIP AND POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES HAVE NOT POSED ANY RECENT OBSTACLES TO OUR GRADUALLY EXPANDING INFORMATION PROGRAM, WE MUST REMAIN ALERT TO THEIR EXISTENCE BOTH IN THE SELECTION OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 DAMASC 00555 02 OF 03 261813Z

MATERIALS AND THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF PLACEMENT EFFORTS.

11. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL RELATIONS: ALTHOUGH SYRIANS HAVE CONSISTENTLY PROFESSED INTEREST IN EXPANDING TRADE WITH THE US, AND US EXPORTS GREW RAPIDLY IN THE INITIAL 1974-1976 PERIOD TO \$276 MILLION IN 1976, A NUMBER OF FACTORS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE TO SUSTAIN THIS RAPID RATE OF EXPANSION. MOST PROMINENT AMONG THESE HAVE BEEN CONTINUED INSTABILITY IN THE AREA, SYRIA'S ECONOMIC SLOW-DOWN IN 1976-77, UNCERTAINTIES CREATED BY THE US ANTI-BOYCOTT LEGISLATION, WIDESPREAD US BUSINESS INEXPERIENCE AND CAUTION IN DEALING WITH SYRIA AND LESS FAVORABLE FINANCING AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN FIRMS THAN TO THEIR COMPETITORS. IN SPITE OF THESE LIMITATIONS THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN VISITING SYRIA AND COMMERCIAL SECTION LIBRARY HAS BEEN INCREASING (5 TO 10 PER WEEK IN LATE 1977). FOR THE FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW WE ARE PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR THIS SUMMER, AN EVENT OF POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO THE SARG, ALTHOUGH WE ANTICIPATE SOME DIFFICULTY IN ATTRACTING US COMPANIES AS EXHIBITORS. IN PAST FEW MONTHS EXIM BANK HAS INDICATED RELAXATION OF ITS PREVIOUS RESTRICTIONS ON FINANCING EXPORTS TO SYRIA BUT NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN APPROVED. MORE RAPID SPENDING OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND SOME ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENT IN SYRIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION SHOULD RESULT IN GRADUALLY INCREASING US EXPORTS TO SYRIA. IN ADDITION IN RECENT MONTHS SYRIA HAS GRANTED TWO EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS TO WESTERN OIL INTERESTS. IN EACH CASE, US FIRMS WILL OPERATE THE CONCESSION, DRAMATIC EVIDENCE OF SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO INVOLVE US PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF ITS ECONOMY HERETOFORE DOMINATED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 DAMASC 00555 02 OF 03 261813Z

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00555 03 OF 03 261804Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SIG-01 MMO-01 ACDA-12 SSM-03 NEAE-00
HA-05 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CU-04
OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 CA-01 SCS-06 CPR-01 SNM-05
/132 W
-----032693 261850Z /50-40

P R 261540Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6633
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 DAMASCUS 0555

JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

12. MILITARY RELATIONS: THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN US/SYRIAN MILITARY RELATIONS. US DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED IN SPRING 1975. ATTACHE AND ASSISTANT ATTACHE, LIKE OTHER WESTERN ATTACHES IN DAMASCUS, HAVE VERY LIMITED ACCESS TO SYRIAN MILITARY. US HAS CONSISTENTLY DENIED SALE OF ALL BUT MOST BENIGN TYPES OF EQUIPMENT TO SYRIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. WE HAVE HAD OCCASIONAL HINTS THAT SYRIAN OFFICERS MIGHT BE AMENABLE TO INVITATIONS TO VISIT US AND OCCASIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN OBTAINING US TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT BUT NONE HAVE BEEN PURSUED TO POINT OF FRUITION. WHILE SARG APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE ASSIGN-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 00555 03 OF 03 261804Z

MENT OF SYRIAN ATTACHE TO WASHINGTON SOME MONTHS AGO NO ONE HAS AS YET BEEN SELECTED. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THIS CORRECT BUT DISTANT ASPECT OF OUR RELATIONS.

13. MISCELLANEOUS: A) DIPLOMATIC RESTRICTIONS: THE RESTRICTIONS WHICH SYRIA IMPOSED ON US MISSION IN 1975 OF 22 DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AND 15 OFFICIAL DIPLOMATIC VEHICLES HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY EASED UPWARD TO OUR CURRENT POSITION OF 25 DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AND 17 VEHICLES. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, EXPECT CEILINGS TO BE REMOVED OR GREATLY INCREASED. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO OTHER LIMITATIONS ON OUR PRESENCE WHICH DO NOT APPLY TO FOREIGN MISSIONS IN GENERAL, WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW A LOW PROFILE POLICY IN VIEW OF DEMONSTRATED SYRIAN SENSITIVITY ON THIS ISSUE. ON-GOING EXCHANGES REGARDING OUR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ARE ALSO A MANIFESTATION OF THIS SENSITIVITY. B) CONSULAR NOTIFICATION AND ACCESS: PROBLEMS WE AND OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS WERE HAVING IN 1975 AND 1976 ATTENUATED IN 1977. NOTIFICATION AND ACCESS PROCEDURES WHEN FOREIGN NATIONAL IS DETAINED BY SYRIAN AUTHORITIES APPEAR TO HAVE IMPROVED. SARG HAS RATIFIED VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND IMMUNITIES AND RATIFICATION OF THE VIENNA CONSULAR CONVENTION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL. WE HAVE HAD NO RECENT TEST CASES, HOWEVER, TO CONFIRM IMPROVED SYRIAN PRACTICE IN THIS AREA. C) NARCOTICS COOPERATION: PERIODIC COOPERATION WITH SYRIAN AUTHORITIES IN INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL HAS PRODUCED POSITIVE RESULTS BOTH IN INFORMATION SHARING AND IN OPERATIONAL COORDINATION. WHILE INSTANCES OF COOPERATION ARE INFREQUENT AND INVOLVE ONLY A FEW SYRIAN OFFICIALS, THEY REPRESENT ANOTHER POSITIVE ASPECT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 00555 03 OF 03 261804Z

14. CONCLUSION. IN BROADER PERSPECTIVE, THE POSITIVE COURSE OF US-SYRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS HAS BEEN ASSISTED BY THE STABILITY OF SYRIA'S LEADERSHIP OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS AND BY ITS POLICY OF SEEKING IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NON-ALIGNMENT. WE HAVE BENEFITED FROM THIS PROCESS. MORE SPECIFICALLY, HOWEVER, OUR OWN ATTENTION AND ATTITUDE HAVE MADE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT. BY BEING WILLING TO DESIGN OUR ASSISTANCE AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS TO MEET PERCEIVED SYRIAN REQUIREMENTS, BY PARTICIPATING IN THE DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR AND SPONSORING TRADE MISSIONS TO SYRIA, BY SUPPORTING

PUBLICLY SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON AND ABOVE ALL,
BY TREATING SYRIA'S LEADERS AS VALUED PARTNERS IN OUR
OVERALL PEACE EFFORTS, WE HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR
CONSTRUCTIVE BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN THE MEASURE THAT
WE CAN CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE THIS POSITIVE ATTITUDE
TOWARD ASSAD AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE,OUR BILATERAL
RELATIONS IN DAMASCUS SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP
UNDERPINNING TO OVERALL US INTERESTS IN THE AREA.
WHILE SYRIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF
A ME SETTLEMENT PROCESS HAS NOT EVOLVED AS FAR OR
AS FAST AS IT RELATIONS WITH US, OVER TIME GOOD
RELATIONS CAN ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF OVERALL US POLICY IN THE AREA AND TO A MORE
POSITIVE SYRIAN VIEW OF PEACE WITH ISRAEL AS WELL. MURPHY

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC00555
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780039-0424
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780121/aaaaarck.tel
Line Count: 454
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: db4609e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3711886
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE POSITIVE COURSE OF US-SYRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS
TAGS: AMGT, EAID, PGOV, PINR, US, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/db4609e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014